

## Message Text

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EA:M. STEARNS

EA/ANP-L. MOSER

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R 081852Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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THE FOL TEL FROM SAIGON DATED MAR 6, 1974 TO SESTATE  
WASHDC AND SECDEF WASHDC IS REPTED:

QUOTE UNCLAS SAIGON 2978

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, VS

SUB: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON U.S. ROLE IN VIETNAM

REF: STATE 037727, SAIGON 2548

1. AS A PRELIMINARY TO DETAILED DISCUSSION OF SHIPLER NEW  
YORK TIMES ARTICLE DATED SAIGON FEB. 16, IT IS NECESSARY  
TO RECORD THAT EMBASSY HAS LONG BEEN AWARE OF DECISIONS TAKEN  
LAST FALL IN HANOI TO MOUNT ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN THIS WINTER AND SPRING  
TO PERSUADE THE CONGRESS TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE MAGNITUDE  
OF BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM.

2. THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE WAS TO BE USED AS THE MAIN COORDIN-  
NATING MECHANISM, AND THE PRG DELEGATION IN PARIS WAS TO BE THE  
PRINCIPAL CHANNEL USING THE REMNANTS OF THE AMERICAN "PEACE  
MOVEMENT" TO BRING INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON SELECTIVE SUSCEPTIBLE,  
BUT INFLUENTIAL, ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA  
AND, PARTICULARLY, ON SUSCEPTIBLE CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS. THE  
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TIMING PREFERRED WAS TO BEGIN WITH INSERTION OF AS MUCH MATERIAL

AS POSSIBLE IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, HOPEFULLY TO SECURE CONDEMNATION OF THE GVN IN FORMAL REPORTS OF CONGRESSIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES, WHICH COULD THEN BE FOLLOWED UP AND GIVEN WIDE CIRCULATION BY "INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING" WHICH WOULD TEND TO CONFIRM AND IF POSSIBLE TO EXPAND ON THE DISTORTIONS THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO HAVE INSERTED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE FORMAL REPORTS.

3. LOOKING AT THE SHIPLER ARTICLE, PARAGRAPH BY PARAGRAPH, THE US MISSION HAS THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS:

4. PARAS 1-3 -- RAY HARRIS IS A GENERAL ELECTRIC EMPLOYEE AT BIEN HOA AIR BASE. HIS JOB IS CLASSIFIED AS A CLEANER OF PARTS AND EQUIPMENT. SHIPLER'S FIGURE OF 2,800 DAO CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS IS ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. THE CURRENT COUNT IS 2,762, A FIGURE PROVIDED BY DAO. SHIPLER DOES NOT BOTHER TO RECORD AT THIS POINT THAT THE NUMBER HAS BEEN REDUCED WITHIN THE PAST YEAR FROM SOME 5,000. HE DOES, HOWEVER, MENTION A REDUCTION IN PARAGRAPH 37 OF HIS ARTICLE, SAYING INACCURATELY THAT 2,200 HAVE LEFT SINCE JULY. HE DOES NOT RECORD FACT AVAILABLE TO HIM THAT HARRIS IS PART OF A GROUP OF CONTRACT EMPLOYEES WHOSE FUNCTION IS TO TEACH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE HOW TO SERVICE PROPERLY MILITARY EQUIPMENT TURNED OVER TO THE GVN AS WELL AS MAINTAIN IT UNTIL THE TRAINING PROCESS IS COMPLETED. NOR DOES SHIPLER RECORD THE FACT KNOWN TO HIM THAT CONTRACT PERSONNEL ARE CONTINUOUSLY WITHDRAWN WHEN TRAINING IS FINISHED. THE "PROGRAM OF MILITARY AID "DOES NOT "SET THE COURSE OF THE WAR," AS SHIPLER PUT IT. THE COURSE IS SET BY THE CONTINUOUS AND CONTINUING COMMUNIST BUILDUP AND EFFORTS OF THE RVNAF TO PROTECT THE POPULATION, LAND AND RESOURCES UNDER GVN CONTROL AT TIME OF THE CEASE FIRE FROM ACTUAL MILITARY ATTACKS MOUNTED BY THE OTHER SIDE, WHICH IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE ARTICLE.

5. PARA 4 -- THIS IS A CLASSIC. SHIPLER CATEGORICALLY POSTULATES "SOUTH VIETNAMESE VIOLATIONS" WITHOUT PRESENTING A SHRED OF EVIDENCE, AND ALLEGES AMERICAN MILITARY AID "DIRECTLY SUPPORTS" SUCH VIOLATIONS WHICH THEREBY "BREAKS THE SPIRIT OF THE ACCORDS." HE DOES RELUCTANTLY CONCEDE THAT "WHETHER THE UNITED STATES IS BREAKING THE LETTER OF THE AGREEMENT COULD PROBABLY BE ARGUED EITHER WAY." IT IS QUITE TRUE THAT TO HANOI "THE SPIRIT OF THE ACCORDS" WAS THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD DELIVER SOUTH VIETNAM

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BOUND HAND AND FOOT INTO THEIR HANDS. FORTUNATELY, ONLY A HANDFUL OF AMERICANS WOULD AGREE WITH THAT INTERPRETATION OF THE "SPIRIT OF THE ACCORDS."

6. PARAS 5 AND 6 -- NO AMERICANS, CONTRACTORS OR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, ARE "INTEGRAL PARTS" OF THE RVNAF MILITARY SYSTEM. THEY PROVIDE LIMITED AND TEMPORARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ONLY TO HELP THE VIETNAMESE BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT. TO DESCRIBE "PENTA-

GON-BASED GENERALS WHO TOUR AIRFIELDS" AS "INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE SUPPLY, TRANSPORT AND INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS" OBVIOUSLY DISTORTS THE MEANING OF THE WORD "INTEGRAL" TO THE BREAKING POINT. AMERICAN GENERALS VISIT NOT ONLY VIETNAM BUT OTHER FRIENDLY NATIONS THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA. THEY ALSO OBSERVE THE USE BEING MADE OF MILITARY AID. (END-USE INSPECTION BY US PERSONNEL IS REQUIRED BY THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE ACT.) THE TERM "LIAISON MEN" PRESUMABLY REFERS TO DAO'S REGIONAL LIAISON OFFICERS. IT IS SIMPLY UNTRUE THAT THEY GIVE "ADVICE," AS SHIPLER REPORTS, AGAIN WITHOUT PRODUCING THE SLIGHTEST SCRAP OF EVIDENCE. EVEN IF PERMISSIBLE, NONE OF THE RLOS IS QUALIFIED. THEY ARE CIVILIANS WHO, IF THEY HAD PREVIOUS MILITARY EXPERIENCE, WERE ENLISTED MEN OR JUNIOR OFFICERS WITH LITTLE OR NO BATTLE MANAGEMENT TRAINING. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ARVN OFFICERS WOULD HEED THEIR ADVICE EVEN IF THEY OFFERED IT. AND IT IS SIMPLY A FALSEHOOD THAT THE CIA GIVES ANY "ADVICE" TO THE NATIONAL POLICE.

7. PARAS 7 AND 8 -- TOTAL BUDGET COST OF MILITARY AID TO THE GVN IN FY-74 IS 1059.2 MILLION. OF THE PROPOSED 390.8 MILLION INCREASE, IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT ABOUT ONE-THIRD IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO AMMUNITION. AMMUNITION IS EXPENDED AT A RATE OF 20 TO 50 PERCENT LESS THAN DURING THE LAST YEAR OF THE WAR, DUE TO US-IMPOSED CONSTRAINTS AND RVNAF SELF-IMPOSED MANAGEMENT CONTROLS. THE US DOES NOT "DUMP MILLIONS IN CASH INTO THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE BUDGET." THE US PUTS GOODS INTO THE ECONOMY WHICH ARE SOLD FOR PIASTERS AND THEN ASSIGNED FMR SUPPORT OF MUTUALLY AGRE  
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